

Bible Study for Sunday August 14, 2022

Our texts for this Sunday are:

- Luke 12:49-56
- Hebrews 11:29-12:2

Read Luke 12:49-56

⁴⁹ “I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵² From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³ they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” ⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain’; and so it happens. ⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat’; and it happens. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

Fire does not always imply destruction, but might also be an instrument of refinement – purifying, strengthening, and catalyzing us into a new being. Jesus’ Baptism of fire and crisis of decision can mean His own impending trial and execution, or it can mean the turning point in our own lives when we are called to choose a path of discipleship that will bring with it some form of pain as well.

With that information, how do you feel about this week’s Gospel text?

The word division/divided is used 3 times in this passage. The word can also mean disunity. Does that change anything for you?

Why do we dislike conflict so much? What if conflict is a sign that things aren’t working as well as you may have thought they were, so change needs to happen. Can good come from conflict?

We tend to play “duck and cover” when conflict arises as we wait for it to be over. Are division and conflict the same thing? How might our propensity to hide from conflict (or anything that even smells like conflict) hinder our Kingdom building work? Or doing what matters to God?

How might this reading ask us to broaden our understanding of faith and what is at stake with our faith (or what it’s supposed to *cost* us)?

What might it mean for us to take a stand for justice even if it means controversy among us? When *have* we done that? When should we do that?

What seems to be happening in vs 56? Is Jesus calling out people that have stopped paying attention? Paying attention to what? What does paying attention cost us? What if vs 56 is calling us to remove any blinders we have so that we can *see* what needs to change? What blinders may we have as individuals and as a church?

What do you think it means to “speak the truth in love”? When is that kind of speaking important? How difficult (or easy) is this for you to do?

Read Hebrews 11:29-12:2

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace. ³² And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. ³⁹ Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect. 12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

“By faith” is used a lot in this passage and attributed to some powerhouses of the Biblical story with some impressive acts of faith. Reread vs 33-34, what could we do “by faith?” What stops us from doing these acts?

What could 12:1 mean for us? Specifically, what might “let us also lay aside every weight” mean? What might be weighing us down?